

Social Enterprise Policy Consultation,
Department of Rural and Community Development,
Trinity Point,
10-11 Leinster Street South,
Dublin 2,
D02 EF85

[National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019-2022](#)

Dear Minister,

Having taken the time to read the draft National Social Enterprise policy for Ireland, I am pleased to see the level of consideration that has gone into to this document which seem well rounded and balanced and will no doubt deliver much needed support for social enterprises to make a positive and tangible impact on our society.

I would like to draw your attention to the following points from our perspective as an organisation that is an established social enterprise supporting the Beauty and Hair sector on a national basis. We are an organisation that works endlessly to support an industry of almost 29000 employees, which is 97% female dominated and is highly visible in rural towns and villages yet supports for this industry is lacking however a social enterprise model offers the industry the ability to make much needed changes and support economic development.

Although I would agree with most of the point and actions to be developed in this draft report, I have found it extremely difficult to access support and funding to develop as we did not fit into so many predefined box's that are easily measured.

I have found that when you seek out the support you are often faced with a situation where people do not know where to send you and this has been a major challenge particularly when you have a new innovative idea.

Our organisation has supported the industry through education and by year end we will have supported over 405 companies and 450 employees. We have five strategic pillars that work hand in hand to support an industry that up until recently has not been well supported.

The reason for my submission is that I feel it important to;

- Ensure that supports for social enterprises are clearly defined and identified in one place, that advisors are in place to help give guidance and there is awareness of this support.
- I feel that many social enterprises and innovators will seek funding which will not fit the mould of many applications and therefore enterprises will find themselves applying for multiple funding sources to try to fulfil their strategic goals, which is not a lean approach for anyone concerned. It would be extremely useful if projects could be assessed on the strategic ambition, impact and ability to deliver the Social Enterprise goals rather than trying to make a project fit a defined application.
- A complete review of application processes, questions and language used should be carried out, clarity on assessment criteria should also be given to applicants
- Multi annual funding would really enable an enterprises ability to deliver quality programs and supports.

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- Regarding awareness, adequate resources and support given to enterprises should allow for the strong marketing which will allow for the awareness and understanding of the benefits of a social enterprise, the best advocates of social enterprises are those that use the services.
- Early and ongoing support for the development of a social enterprise is essential therefore education programs that sub-divide social enterprises, to establish strategic development plans, funding plans, accelerator programs and governance programs are essential.
- Often education given at a local level can be less relevant to large social enterprise organisations working at a different level, therefore national programs with strong, clearly defined focus would be welcomed.
- Regarding staffing high performing social enterprises to develop and achieve the desired social and economic impact then it is essential that an organisation can attract and retain the right calibre of employees to help deliver the strategic goals. With a skills shortage in many sectors it is more important then ever to attract people with the right skills.
- Finally, Social enterprises are perfectly placed to impact and inform policy therefore a working group of social enterprise and various stakeholders should be established to gain a well-rounded and informed policy on areas of importance.

Should you require any additional information please don't hesitate to contact me on 0870657864.

Yours sincerely



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